

March 27, 2022

Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, ranking members Hwang, Somers, and Petit, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Amy Ford Keohane, and I live in Riverside. I have been a lifelong supporter of sensible gun laws that keep firearms out of the hands of those who could harm themselves and others, and a longtime believer that gun violence is a public health crisis. I have been an Executive Board Member of Connecticut Against Gun Violence Education Fund (CAGV) for four years.

I am submitting testimony in favor of HB-5397, An Act Establishing the Office of Gun Violence Prevention and Declaring Gun Violence a Public Health Crisis and SB-477, An Act Concerning the Public Health of Residents of the State.

I am testifying in favor of the language in HB-5397 for a number of reasons, one of which is that it explicitly declares gun violence a public health crisis – because it is. Last year, gun homicides were the highest in 25 years, nearly double the level in 2018. The disproportionate number of victims of color is a tragic reflection of our state's racial inequities which is why it is so important that this bill is designed to include the voices of those most impacted by community gun violence. Finally, it includes rigorous data gathering and research to drive evidence-informed grant-making, and it calls for the kind of funding we need to address the magnitude of this crisis.

I also want to acknowledge the critical role Senator Marilyn Moore has played in getting the legislature to address the crisis of community gun violence that led to the establishment of the Advisory Council on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention. CAGV would like to see Senator Moore's bill, SB-477, move forward including language that is part of HB-5397.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony - I urge you to support these bills.

Sincerely,

Amy Ford Keohane

Riverside, CT